

December 23, 2009

TO: Nathan Marino

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Nathan Marino v. Western Washington University (WWU)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-09-010

The Director's review of WWU's allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on written documentation.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to November 13, 2008, the date WWU's Human Resources (HR) Office received your request for a position review. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, including the Position Questionnaire (PQ) you signed in November 2008 and the exhibits and written responses submitted by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of the assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification.

Background

On November 13, 2008, WWU's HR Office received your request for a review of your Information Technology Specialist (ITS 2) position. You believe your position should be reallocated to the Information Technology Specialist 4 (ITS 4). On January 13, 2009, Classification and Compensation Manager Holly Karpstein completed the Report of Position Review, which she issued on January 14, 2009. As part of her review, Ms. Karpstein met with you to discuss your duties and reviewed the ITS 2, ITS 3, and ITS 4 classifications. Ms. Karpstein determined the typical work performed by your position did not reflect the level of responsibilities at the ITS 3 and ITS 4 levels. As a result, Ms. Karpstein determined the ITS 2 was the appropriate classification for the work assigned to your position.

On February 13, 2009, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of WWU's allocation determination. The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Mr. Marino Perspective

Mr. Marino asserts his position supports websites and developers for the entire Student Affairs and Academic Support Services Division. Mr. Marino further contends his work is not just limited to supporting web applications or appointment scheduling in the reservation program (Banner). Mr. Marino points out that the developers he supports are responsible for entire websites rather than web pages. Mr. Marino contends he has served as a project leader and applies advanced technical knowledge and discretion to evaluate and resolve complex tasks. Mr. Marino asserts his position has been tasked with directing or facilitating the installation of complex systems, software, and applications, as well as developing and implementing quality assurance testing. As an example, Mr. Marino states he has produced and integrated video and Adobe Flash content into many division websites. Mr. Marino asserts he produces videos at the division level and that he reformats and publishes the videos on WWU's streaming web server for access via the Internet for a variety of purposes and events. Mr. Marino asserts his position has been tasked with designing, developing, testing, implementing, and maintaining these websites owned by specific departments within the division or the division as a whole, as well as departments outside the division. While Mr. Marino acknowledges there are standard templates, he contends he researches and implements many different technologies based on department need and customizes each template. Mr. Marino disagrees that the majority of his tasks are limited in scope. Instead, Mr. Marino contends that his work routinely impacts all of the students, faculty, and staff, as well as the public. Mr. Marino believes the ITS 4 encompasses the level of work assigned to his position.

Summary of WWU's Reasoning

WWU asserts the majority of Mr. Marino's assigned duties involve technical support to web developers and users. As such, WWU indicates his duties include consulting with staff and responding to trouble reports from users, coordinating installations, supporting and enhancing existing applications consistent with university standards, conducting usability testing, and training users. WWU asserts Mr. Marino's position has not been assigned responsibility for mentoring web users on new technologies. Instead, WWU asserts his position provides training and direction on the software/templates the web developers/users use to enhance and build their websites. WWU acknowledges Mr. Marino downloads software programs from the Internet and performs basic configuration. However, WWU notes this function does not require coding or programming. WWU also acknowledges Mr. Marino has served on a team providing technical support and recommendations for a reservation program that schedules orientation appointments and that he conducted testing. However, WWU contends the programming was handled by higher level IT staff. In addition, WWU points out Mr. Marino's duties relating to video production do not make up the majority of his work assignments. WWU describes the majority of Mr. Marino's work

assignments as singular in scope and impacting individuals or smaller program units. Therefore, WWU believes the ITS 2 is the best fit for Mr. Marino's position.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

On the Position Questionnaire (PQ) you indicate that your immediate supervisor is Anna Carey, Director of New Student Services/Family Outreach (NSSFO) (Exhibit B-1). Ms. Carey reports to Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support Services Susanna Yunker, who reports to the Vice President (VP) for Student Affairs and Academic Support Services (Exhibit B-3). Although Ms. Carey is your supervisor, you indicate that you report to the office of the VP of Student Affairs 50% of the time (Exhibit B-1, page 8). You further explain that you receive work assignments in person, via e-mail, or phone, which can come from Ms. Carey, her assistant, or others requesting your assistance through the Student Affairs Division.

You describe your major duties (70%) as supporting web sites and developers in all of the division's departments. You indicate that 30% of your work relates to support for the New Student Services online reservations (Banner). You indicate you receive "little or no direction" (Exhibit B-2, page 2); however, you also indicate that questions about your work may be directed to Ms. Carey, her assistant, the special assistant to the VP of Student Affairs, or the University's Webmaster (Exhibit B-1, page 4). Although you organize and prioritize your own work, you meet with Ms. Carey on a weekly basis to discuss progress on assignments or projects. Ms. Carey provides the context for your work and assists with administrative problem solving. While you indicate that you direct the work of the Student Web Coordinator for NSSFO, Ms. Carey clarified that responsibility is assigned to Ms. Manning, her Assistant Director (Exhibit B-1, page 13).

When considering the duties and responsibilities assigned to your position, I reviewed those you detailed as 70% of your work in conjunction with the Position Description identified as your position and entitled *Web Applications Support Specialist (IT Specialist 2) (Included with Exhibit A-4)*. In the management portion of the PQ, Ms. Carey indicated that the position description provides the duties assigned.

A summary of the duties you describe as supporting web sites and developers (70%) includes:

- Responding to *ad hoc* requests for support.

- Training new developers on the University's Web template and software used to edit sites.
- Consulting with Directors, Web Developers and staff on how to make their sites usable and visually appealing.
- Planning/hosting quarterly Division Web Developer meetings to discuss trends and new technology.
- Create Flash animations for Division websites.
- Manage and maintain the Division's website.
- Manage Nakama Web site for Division's annual retreat.
- Video production for various departments in the Division.
- Keep up to date with latest software/video production technology.
- Investigate, analyze, and fix reported problems.
- Gather and report website usage statistics.
- Create HTML based mass mailings for students and parents.

Based on the documents submitted for the Director's review, the consultation with directors and web developers occurs primarily within the Student Affairs Division. Also, the duty you describe as managing and maintaining the division's website is in the context of providing technical support to web developers and users in the division who have ultimate responsibility for formatting and creating the content of their respective websites.

The job summary on the position description indicates that your position consults with division staff and campus-wide technology partners for the design and implantation of new web applications. The examples of web applications given include online program registration forms, applications and appointment scheduling. The essential work functions provide insight into the level of technical responsibility assigned to your position. For example, the duties include gathering user needs; developing web templates, navigation structures, and other graphic elements; and ensuring web applications are usable and compliant with standards. Further, the duties include assisting in the development of operating procedures, strategies, and practices (Exhibit A-4). During your interview with Ms. Karpstein, you stated that the purpose of your position was to standardize websites with university templates so that they share a common platform. Further, the majority of your work is to provide training and direction on the software/templates to enhance and build websites. While your work now includes video production and assisting users in creating interactive websites, you indicated this function consists of 25% of your work (Exhibit B-6). Your supervisor also indicated the duties you perform relating to video production have occurred in the past 4-6 months (at the time relevant to this review) (Exhibit B-1).

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations.

The definition for the **ITS 4** states the following:

Performs analysis, system design, acquisition, installation, maintenance, programming, project management, quality assurance, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and/or consulting tasks for complex computing system, application, data access/retrieval, multi-functional databases or database management systems, telecommunication, project or operational problems.

As a senior-level specialist in an assigned area of responsibility and/or as a team or project leader, applies advanced technical knowledge and considerable discretion to evaluate and resolve complex tasks such as planning and directing large-scale projects; conducting capacity planning; designing multiple-server systems; directing or facilitating the installation of complex systems, hardware, software, application interfaces, or applications; developing and implementing quality assurance testing and performance monitoring; planning, administering, and coordinating organization-wide information technology training; acting as a liaison on the development of applications; representing institution-wide computing and/or telecommunication standards and philosophy at meetings; or developing security policies and standards.

Incumbents understand the customer's business from the perspective of a senior business person and are conversant in the customer's business language. Projects assigned to this level impact geographical groupings of offices/facilities, and/or regional, divisional, or multiple business units with multiple functions. The majority of tasks performed have wide-area impact, integrate new technology, and/or affect how the mission is accomplished.

The majority of your work involves technical support to web developers and users within the Division of Student Affairs. While I understand you host quarterly meetings for web developers in the division to discuss trends and technology and you may participate as part of a team, there is no indication from your managers that your position has been assigned senior-level specialist or project leader assignments at the ITS 4 level. The quarterly meetings you facilitate provide communication to users and help standardize websites. In addition, the examples of websites you describe in exhibit A-5 as ones you have created, such as Nakama, are for specific functions or events within Student Affairs. They do not encompass the scope of responsibility involving the complexity or wide-area impact indicative of the ITS 4 level.

The definition for the **ITS 3** states the following:

In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.

Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs assessments; leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.

The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

While certain aspects of the work you perform may fit within the ITS 3 classification, the bulk of your work is in a technical support role to web developers and users in the division who have ultimate responsibility for the websites in their particular departments.

The definition for the **ITS 2** includes the following:

In support of information systems and users, performs standard consulting, analyzing, programming, maintenance, installation and/or technical support.

Under general supervision, follows established work methods and procedures to complete tasks on computers and/or telecommunication software/hardware, applications, support products, projects, or databases for small scale systems or programs or pieces of larger systems or programs. Performs standard tasks such as consulting with customers to identify and analyze technology needs and problems; responding to and resolving trouble reports from users; processing equipment and service orders; coordinating installations, moves, and changes; analyzing problems for parts of applications and solving problems with some assistance; supporting and enhancing existing applications in compliance with specifications and standards; conducting unit, system or usability testing; writing specifications and developing reports; developing and conducting application, software and/or system operation training for users; or serving as part of a problem solving team addressing more complex issues. The majority of tasks are limited in scope and impact individuals or small groups. Complex problems are referred to a higher level.

Your position performs standard consulting, analyzing, programming, and technical support to web developers and users in various departments throughout the division to assist in the enhancement of websites. In that capacity, you follow university standards for web design and use software programs to help customize sites. In addition, your position is tasked with responding to requests for support, training new developers on university web templates, providing advice on the aesthetics and usability of websites, analyzing user needs, and resolving day to day problems within your scope of responsibility.

While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. The typical work examples identified in the ITS 2 class specification most in line with your duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Providing help desk technical support, and/or responds to trouble reports from users and identifying and resolving problems within their control...
- Advising users on the use of systems, hardware, and software; researching product information . . .
- Applying pre-tested modifications to applications software . . .
- Supporting and enhancing existing applications in compliance with specifications and standards . . .
- Assisting higher-level analysts with larger projects. Assisting in developing prototypes; developing preliminary application specifications; coding, testing, and implementing application components . . .

Overall, the scope of your duties and the majority of your assignments are best described by the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 753-0139.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: John Kapple, PSE
Holly Karpstein, WWU
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

Nathan Marino v. Western Washington University

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List of Exhibits

A. Nathan Marino Exhibits

1. Letter of request for a Director's Review February 13, 2009:
2. Report of Position Review dated January 13, 2008 (WWU's allocation decision)
3. Position Questionnaire (PQ) signed November 2008
4. Division Web Application Support Specialist Job Posting with attached Position Description for Web Applications Support Specialist (IT Specialist 2)
5. Nathan Marino's rebuttal to WWU's allocation decision
6. Detailed Log of items work on "last 7 or 8 weeks." (Outside time period of review; considered as part of Mr. Marino's argument that the duties reflect similar work performed at the time relevant to this review).

B. Western Washington University Exhibits

1. Position Questionnaire, Parts 1, 2 and 3
2. Class Specifications: Information Technology Specialist 2 (479J)
3. Class Specifications: Information Technology Specialist 3 (479K)
4. Class Specifications: Information Technology Specialist 4 (479L)
5. Organizational chart for Student Affairs and Academic Support Services Division.
6. Letter dated August 4, 2009 from Holly Karpstein – WWU's Explanation of PQ and The Major Duties.

C. July 1, 2009 letter from John Kapple, Public School Employees of Washington (PSE), requesting Director's review on written documents.